

REMARKS

Applicants are in receipt of the Office Action mailed June 13, 2005.

The Examiner indicated that the patent application contains claims directed to the following alleged patentably distinct species of the claimed invention:

Group I drawn to Figures 1, 2, and 5;

Group II drawn to Figure 3;

Group III drawn to Figure 4; and

Group IV drawn to Figure 6.

Based on review of the claims, Applicants elect the claims of Group I, namely, claims 1 – 9, 11, and 13 *with traverse* since these claims are also applicable to Groups II, III and IV. As a result, examination of groups I, II, III, and IV is respectfully requested. Claim 10 is applicable to Groups II, III, and IV. Claim 12 is applicable to Group III. Claim 14 is applicable to Group IV. As a result, claims 1 – 9, 11, and 13 are generic to groups I, II, III, and IV; and claim 10 is generic to groups II, III, and IV.

In view of the significant overlap between Groups I, II, III, and IV, and the presence of generic claims to all four groups as well as sub-generic claims to three of the four groups, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner will be required to search art related to the three groups as part of the analysis of the generic claims.

Moreover, it is respectfully submitted that the subject matter of all four groups is sufficiently related that a thorough search for the subject matter of one of the four species would encompass a search for the subject matter of the other species. See MPEP § 803, which states that “[i]f the search and examination of an entire application can be made without serious burden, the Examiner must examine it on the merits, even though it includes claims to distinct or independent inventions.” (Emphasis added). This policy should apply in the present application to avoid unnecessary delay and expense to the Applicants and duplicative examination by the

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Patent Office. Therefore, in view of the foregoing, the election is made with traverse as to Groups II through IV.

As noted by the Examiner, upon the allowance of a generic claim, Applicants will be entitled to consideration of claims to other species in addition to the elected species, provided that all claims to each additional species are written in dependent form or otherwise include all the limitations of an allowed generic claim as provided by 37 CFR 1.141.

If the Examiner has any questions with respect to this communication, he is kindly urged to call the undersigned.

Applicants believe no fee is due with this response. However, if a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 18-0013, under Order No. 65856-0060 from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

Dated: July 5, 2005

Respectfully submitted,

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